

Message Text

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43

ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0070

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMCONSUL BREMEN

AMCONSUL HAMBURG

AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

USMISSION USBERLIN

USEUCOM (POLAD)

USAFE (PPLAD)

USAREUR (POLAD)

AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF

UNCLAS FRANKFURT 2914

E.O. 11652C N/A

TAGS: PINT, GW

SUBJ: SAARLAND ELECTION RESULTS

1. SUMMARY: ANTICIPATED PHOTO FINISH IN
ELECTIONS FOR SAARLAND PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE PRODUCED
DEAD HEAT, CDU AND SPD/FDP ALLIANCE EACH WINNING TWENTY-
FIVE SEATS. ALL THREE PARTIES GAINED VOTES AND
PERCENTAGES, BUT FDP WAS GREATEST GAINER, RETURNING
TO PARLIAMENT AFTER FIVE-YEAR ABSENCE.
CONSTITUTIONAL LAWYER AND PARTY LEADERS DISCUSSING
UNUSUAL STALEMATE SITUATION, IN WHICH NEITHER
PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT NOR OPPOSITION HAS MAJORITY.
TERM OF PRESENT ALL-CDU GOVERNMENT EXPIRES JULY 13,
AND PARTY DETERMINED REMAIN IN OFFICE. MINORITY CDU
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GOVERNMENT OR THREE-PARTY REGIME SEEM MOST LIKELY

ALTERNATIVES. END SUMMARY.

2. DESPITE FEARS THAT MAY DAY HOLIDAY WEEKEND MIGHT REDUCE TURN-OUT, 88.9 0/0 (5.8 0/0 MORE THAN 1970) OF SAARLAND ELECTORATE VOTED IN MAY 4 ELECTIONS FOR PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE (LANDTAG). CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS (CDU) WON 49.1 0/0 (UP 1.3 0/0), SOCIAL DEMOCRATES (SPD) 41.8 (UP 1 0/0), FREE DEMOCRATS (FDP) 7.4 0/0 (UP 3 0/0), COMMUNISTS (DKP) 1 0/0 (DOWN 1.7 0/0), AND NATIONALISTS (NPD) 0.7 PXP (DOWN 2.7 0/0). THESE RESULTS GAVE THE CDU TWENTY-FIVE SEATS (DOWN TWO), THE SPD TWENTY-TWO (DOWN ONE), AND THE FDP THREE, THE LATTER PARTY THUS RETURNING TO THE LANDTAG AFTER AN ABSENCE OF FIVE YEARS. ELECTION EXPERTS ESTIMATE THAT AS FEW AS 79 AND NOT MORE THAN 350 ADDITIONAL VOTES (0.05 0/0), PROPERLY DISTRIBUTED, WOULD HAVE PERMITTED THE CDU TO RETAIN ITS ABSOLUTE MAJORITY. AS IN THE RHEINLAND-PFALZ LANDTAG ELECTIONS TWO MONTHS AGO, THE CDU MADE GAINS IN CITIES AND THE SPD IN RURAL AREAS.

3. SAARLAND CONSTITUTION DOES NOT PRESCRIBE WHAT SHOULD BE DONE IN STAND-OFF SITUATION, AND INITIAL OPINIONS EXPRESSED BY LEGAL EXPERTS VARY. THEM OF PRESENT CDU GOVERNMENT DOES NOT EXPIRE BEFORE JULY 13, SO PARTY LEADERS HAVE TWO MONTHS TO NEGOTIATE SOLUTION. MINISTER-PRESIDENT ROEDER HAS SAID CDU DETERMINED TO REMAIN IN OFFICE, AND SOME CONSTITUTIONAL LAWYERS MAINTAIN PRESENT CABINET CAN CONTINUE INDEFINITELY SINCE OPPOSITION CANNOT MUSTER MAJORITY TO VOTE NON-CONFIDENCE AND TWO-THIRDS REQUIRED TO DISSOLVE PARLIAMENT AND FORCE NEW ELECTIONS. HOWEVER, UNLESS SUCH MINORITY CARETAKER GOVERNMENT ABLE WIN SUPPORT OF AT LEAST INDIVIDUAL OPPOSITION MEMBERS FOR ESSENTIAL LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS (FOR EXAMPLE BUDGET), IT IS DIFFICULT TO SEE HOW IT COULD ALONG ENDURE. ROEDER HAS ALSO BERATED FDP FOR ITS COMMITMENT TO SPD, AND CDU' FIRST EFFORT WILL PROBABLY BE TO SEEK COALITION WITH FDP.

4. ALTHOUGH FDP FORMALLY COMMITTED TO SPD AND PARTY
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CHAIRMAN KLUMPP HAS SAID COALITION WITH ANY PARTY EXCEPT SPD UNTHINKABLE UNQUOTE FOR HIM, THERE IS STRONG MINORITY IN SAAR FDP WHICH WOULD WELCOME EXCUSE TO FORM GOVERNMENT WITH CDU ESPECIALLY SINCE ALTERNATIVES ARE WEAK MINORITY GOVERNMENT OR THREE-PARTY REGIME WITHOUT PARLIAMENTARY OPPOSITION. PERHAPS IN HOPE OF HEADING OFF POSSIBLE FDP DEFECTION, SPD CHAIRMAN LAEPPEL HAS RULED OUT CDU/SPD QUOTE GRAND UNQUOTE

COALITION AND HAS SAID THAT SPD AND FDP TOGETHER WILL FORM EITHER GOVERNMENT OR OPPOSITION. HE HAS ALSO RULED OUT NEW ELECTIONS IN IMMEDIATE FUTURE. HOWEVER, LAEPPE HAS NOT RULED OUT GOVERNMENT OF ALL THREE PARTIES, WHICH MENTIONED WITH DCU MINORITY GOVERNMENT BY MANY COMMENTATORS AS MOST LIKELY ALTERNATIVES.

5. EVEN IF CDU REMAINS AT HEAD OF SAAR GOVERNMENT, THE PROVINCE'S THREE VOTES IN THE BUDES RAT WILL PROBABLY BE NEUTRALIZED ON CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES, THUS ENDING THE CDU/CSU MAJORITY IN THE SECOND CHAMBER OF THE FEDERAL LEGISLATURE. NATIONAL CDU GENERAL SECRETARY BIEDENKOPF ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE PARTY FAILED TO ACHIEVE ITS OBJECTIVE AND LOST CONTROL OF THE BUNDES RAT, WHILE NATIONAL CDU CHAIRMAN KOHL - IN A MORE OPTIMISTIC COMMENT - SAW HIS PARTY'S GAINS IN THE MAY 4 BALLOTING COMPARED WITH 1972 BUDESTAG ELECTIONS (UP 5.7 0/0 IN SAARLAND) AS PROMISING BASIS FOR VICTORY IN 1976 BUNDESTAG ELECTIONS. HARLAN

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